

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

As Members of the State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, we are calling on you to urge the Broadcasting Board of Governors to replace Mr. Larry Register as the News Director of the U.S. taxpayer-funded Alhurra television network. As you know, Alhurra was launched in 2004 to be a bridge between the U.S. and the Arab world, promoting American values, such as freedom, democracy and the rule of law. To achieve this mandate, Alhurra aims to provide "responsible coverage of breaking news in the Middle East." However, Mr. Register has not taken care to uphold this standard in all of the programming that he has approved since he joined Alhurra in November 2006.

In December 2006, Mr. Register approved the airing of a live broadcast of Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hasan Nasrallah for more than an hour. According to the March 12, 2007 edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, less than five minutes into this rant, Nasrallah told the audience behind him to stop their gun-firing, explaining, "the only place where bullets should be is the chest of the enemies of Lebanon: the Israeli enemy." Register also approved the airing of additional live interviews with Hamas leader Ismail Haniya and yet another with an alleged al Qaeda operative who "expressed joy that 9/11 rubbed 'America's nose in the dust'."

These programming decisions directly violated a written U.S. policy prohibiting broadcasts of terrorists live and unfiltered in any U.S.-funded international broadcasting. It goes against everything that our country stands for to literally hand terrorists a microphone—particularly to Hezbollah leader Nasrallah, who heads an organization that has killed more Americans than any other terrorist group except al-Qaeda—to spread their vitriolic, hate-filled, anti-American and anti-Israel remarks. This is neither in America's best interest, nor is it in the best interests of the Arab viewers who are tuning into Alhurra.


However, the problems with Alhurra's programming do not end there. Under Mr. Register's leadership, Alhurra has also devoted extensive coverage to events and sources that deny the existence of the Holocaust. In fact, during the Holocaust denial conference held in Tehran in December 2006, an Alhurra reporter referred to those who believe Hitler killed six million Jews as "Holocaust supporters," as if it is a theory to which one subscribes. This same reporter also suggested that the conference attendees who did not deny the Holocaust "didn't enforce their statements with scientific evidence." Finally, in closing the piece, the Alhurra reporter referred to Israel as "the Jewish state on Palestinian lands."

Madame Secretary, as you noted in your 2004 remarks during the signing ceremony for the Anti-Semitism Review Act, which created an office in the State Department dedicated to monitoring and combating anti-Semitism, "[m]ore than six decades after the Holocaust, anti-Semitism is not just an historical fact, however. It is a current event. Defending human dignity means defeating anti-Semitism." This profound statement continues to be true and reinforces why it is so critical that U.S. taxpayer-funded broadcasts must not include programming that spreads intolerance and reinforces anti-Semitic propaganda. It makes no sense to have a State Department office dedicated to fighting anti-Semitism, while the Department funds and supports Mr. Register, who bears responsibility for Alhurra reporting that perpetuates anti-Semitic stereotypes.

For these reasons, we call on you to urge the Broadcasting Board of Governors to remove Mr. Register from his position as the News Director at Alhurra and replace him with someone who understands the importance of using U.S. taxpayer funded international broadcasting to promote American values in the Arab world rather than provide a platform for terrorists to spread hateful rhetoric and incite violence.

We look forward to your kind and prompt reply.

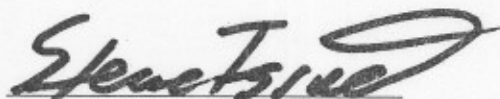
Sincerely,



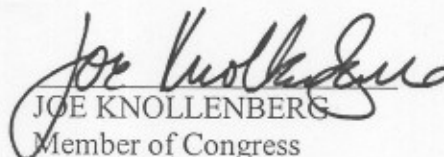
STEVEN R. ROTHMAN
Member of Congress



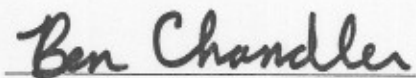
MARK STEVEN KIRK
Member of Congress



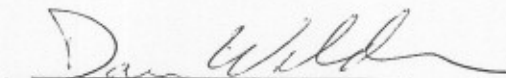
STEVE ISRAEL
Member of Congress



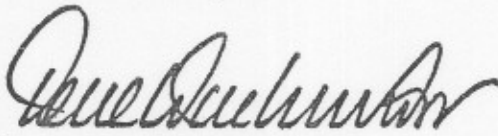
JOE KNOLLENBERG
Member of Congress



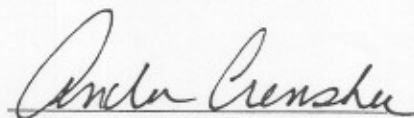
BEN CHANDLER
Member of Congress



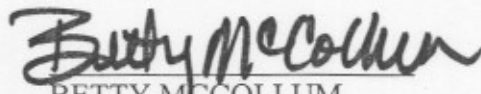
DAVE WELDON
Member of Congress



JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.
Member of Congress



ANDER CRENSHAW
Member of Congress


BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress

SRR:sos
CC:

The Honorable Kenneth Tomlinson, Chairman
Broadcasting Board of Governors

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairwoman
House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations

The Honorable Frank Wolf, Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations

The Honorable Tom Lantos, Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member
House Committee on Foreign Affairs